

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Master of Science (M.S.) in Curriculum and Instruction

Program Objectives

1. To develop and understanding of what affects learning.
2. To plan curriculum and instruction to support student learning.
3. To plan multi-dimensional assessments and report student progress.
4. To communicate effectively to others within the educational community.
5. To provide opportunities for continued professional growth and collaboration.

The Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction is designed around the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which are:

- a. Become teachers who are committed to students and their learning:
 - Can recognize differences in students and adjust practice accordingly
 - Know developmental characteristics of children and plan accordingly
 - Foster students' self-esteem, civic responsibility and respect for others
- b. Become teachers who know the subjects they teach and how to teach them to students:
 - Know how subject knowledge is created and organized
 - Understand how subject knowledge is used in the real world
 - Use various methods to convey subject knowledge
 - Help students learn by problem solving and making discoveries
- c. Become teachers who are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning:
 - Modify teaching methods and classroom environment to meet student needs
 - Able to try new approaches to instruction
 - Use varied assessment to evaluate individuals and groups of students
 - Can clearly explain student performance to parents

d. Become teachers who think systematically about their practice and learn from experience:

- Are lifelong learners
- Seek advice from colleagues and others to strengthen their practice
- Draw on educational research and own experience to strengthen their practice
- Commitment to continued learning provides a model for students

e. Become teachers who are members of learning communities:

- Work creatively and collaboratively with colleagues, parents, and community
- Strive to improve schoolwide curriculum and instruction
- Work with parents to promote student growth
- Work with community resources to enrich and supplement student learning

Assessment Plan for Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction

One of the most important actions we can take to improve schools and student learning is to strengthen teaching. Thus, the overall goal of the Master's program in Curriculum and Instruction is to focus on strengthening the teaching practices of the master teachers in this program.

The program is aligned to three sets of standards, each describing excellent teaching. The first, the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), forms the foundation set of standards for the program. In addition, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS) are addressed in the program. (See the matrix at the end of this document for the alignment of these sets of standards and the program courses in which the standards are met.)

The program is a 36-hour program made up of core courses, specialization courses and/or electives, and either a 6-hour culminating experience and comprehensive exam, or the completion of a thesis. Following is a description of these program components, including assessment indicators.

Core courses

C&I 401 Instructional Media and Technology: Applications of technology to theories of learning and methods of instruction. Developing and evaluating courseware to facilitate classroom instruction.

C&I 402 Reflective Teaching Practice: The study of the relationship between teacher reflection, planning, decision-making, and teaching practice.

C&I 407 Learning in Educational Settings: The study of classroom learning and assessment.

C&I 409 Student Diversity and Educational Practices: Examination of student diversities found in classrooms and the impact of diverse learners on curricular and instructional practices. (Prerequisites: C&I 402 and C&I 407)

C&I 411 Curriculum: The study of curriculum models, planning, and evaluation. (Prerequisites: C&I 402 and C&I 407)

EAF 410 Research Methodology and Statistics in Education: The development of basic skills required in the understanding, planning and executing of a research study; introduction to analysis of statistical and qualitative data.

In each of the courses listed above, varied activities, projects, and exams are implemented as part of the assessment process. Successful completion of these activities provides evidence that master teachers meet the above-mentioned standards.

Specialization and electives

Several specializations are available based on master teachers' interests or professional needs. Six hour specializations can be obtained in teachers' academic disciplines, early childhood, middle school education, exceptional learners, and literacy. Other specializations may be developed based on teacher needs, interdisciplinary collaborations, and faculty expertise. Although the curriculum allows for six hours of electives within or outside the College of Education, teachers may choose to use nine or twelve hours for the specialization.

Professional Research

Teachers may choose from two professional research options to complete the Master's program. First, teachers may choose to complete a year-long (six credit hour) action research project. The action research project will build on teachers' knowledge of theory, research, and practice. Teachers may complete the coursework and portfolios leading to National Board certification as an action research project. The action research option is completed in C&I 481 and C&I 482.

C&I 481 Professional Research I: Design a curricular or instructional research project in an educational setting.

C&I 482 Professional Research II: Conduct a curricular or instructional research project in an educational setting.

The second option available to master teachers is the thesis option (six credit hours).

It is these culminating experiences (either the thesis or the 481/482 with comprehensive exam) that provide the most important opportunity for assessment. These experiences require teachers to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in curriculum/instruction at a higher level of understanding than ever before in their careers, and as a result, it becomes the ultimate assessment tool. It is the avenue by which the master teacher demonstrates his/her ability to apply sound theory to real classrooms and children.

Matrix of program standards and courses in which they are met

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Propositions	Interstate New Teacher Assessment And Support Consortium; Illinois Professional Teaching Standards	C&I Master's Program Courses
<p>I. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.</p> <p><i>Accomplished teachers believe all students can learn, and they act on that belief by recognizing differences among students and adjusting their practice accordingly. Accomplished teachers also take into account how children develop when planning learning activities. In addition, accomplished teachers foster students' self-esteem, civic responsibility, and respect for one another.</i></p>	<p>#2 Human development and learning</p> <p>#3 Diversity</p>	<p>C&I 407</p> <p>C&I 409</p> <p>C&I 481/482</p> <p>Specialization/Electives</p>
<p>II. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.</p> <p><i>Accomplished teachers know how knowledge in their subjects is created, organized, linked to other disciplines, and used in the real world. They use a repertoire of</i></p>	<p>#1 Content knowledge</p> <p>#4 Planning for instruction</p> <p>#6 Instructional delivery</p>	<p>C&I 401</p> <p>C&I 402</p> <p>C&I 411</p> <p>C&I 481/482</p> <p>Specialization/Electives</p>

<p><i>effective teaching methods to convey a subject to students. Accomplished teachers also help students learn by having them solve problems and make their own discoveries.</i></p>	<p>#7 Communication</p>	
<p>III. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.</p> <p><i>Accomplished teachers modify their teaching methods and classroom environment to meet students' needs, and try new approaches when others fail. They know how and when to get students, colleagues, and classroom volunteers to assist them. In addition, accomplished teachers use varied assessment methods to evaluate individual students as well as the entire class. They can clearly explain performance to parents.</i></p>	<p>#5 Learning environment</p> <p>#8 Assessment</p>	<p>C&I 407</p> <p>C&I 409</p> <p>C&I 411</p> <p>C&I 481/482</p> <p>Specialization/Electives</p>
<p>IV. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.</p> <p><i>Accomplished teacher are lifelong learners who regularly seek advice from colleagues and others to strengthen their practice. They also draw on education research- as well as their own classroom experience- to improve the teaching. Their enthusiasm for,</i></p>	<p>#10 Reflection and professional growth</p> <p>#11 Professional conduct</p>	<p>C&I 402</p> <p>EAF 410</p> <p>C&I 481/482</p> <p>Specialization/Electives</p>

<i>and commitment to, continued learning provide a compelling model for their students.</i>		
V. Teachers are members of learning communities. <i>Accomplished teachers reach beyond the classroom to work collaboratively with colleagues, parents, and the community. With colleagues, they strive to improve schoolwide curriculum and instruction and to bolster the teaching of the entire faculty. With parents, they work to promote student growth. In the community, accomplished teachers take advantage of resources to enrich and supplement student learning.</i>	#9 Collaborative relationships #11 Professional conduct #3 Diversity	C&I 401 C&I 409 C&I 411 C&I 481/482 Specialization/Electives

Assessment procedures currently in place

Individual faculty members continually evaluate students with regard to the achievement of objectives while students are in their classes. Syllabi are constructed according to the standards listed above in the matrix. Course evaluations are done for each course. In addition, student concerns are addressed at the regular meetings of the cadre of advisors. The most rigorous methods of evaluating the achievement of program objectives are through the culminating experiences in both the thesis option and the comprehensive exam option. In the case of the thesis, students must orally defend their thesis after a chair and committee have monitored their progress. The committee makes the determination that the student has successfully completed the requirements for the thesis, and thus the culminating experience for the degree. For students completing the comprehensive exam option, a two-course culminating experience (C&I 481/482) requires the completion of a research project and the successful completion of a written comprehensive exam. Faculty advisors in the Master's program evaluate the comprehensive exams as part of a blind review process. Two readers evaluate each comprehensive exam. The program also assesses its achievement of objectives as it prepares for reviews such as that required by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Plans for Assessment

The report on the Curriculum and Instruction Master's degree for the Illinois State Board of Education was recently completed. An issue that became apparent as a result of writing that report was that more complete assessment needs to be done within the program. Although the assessment procedures in place are useful, they do not provide enough information about students' perspectives about the program and whether the courses and required culminating activities helped them meet the standards upon which the entire program is based. The advisory cadre will be designing and piloting an exit interview in the next year for students completing the program.

In addition, since the University is no longer gathering information from students once they graduate from programs, the C&I Master's program plans to obtain information from graduates via surveys. The advisory cadre will be planning how to proceed with these post-graduate surveys within the next year. While the surveys will assess students' perspectives about the standards and how well the program prepared them to meet those standards, it is expected that the surveys will be an opportunity to gather additional information about the quality of the program. Decisions about specific survey items will be part of next year's planning.

How Assessment data will be used to monitor and improve the program

The advisory cadre will continue to use the assessment procedures in place to monitor the Curriculum and Instruction Master's program. In addition, the newly designed exit interviews and post-graduate survey data, as it is developed, will be used to assess the effectiveness of the program. The members of the advisory cadre will, as part of the new plan for expanding assessment, decide how to use the new data to monitor and improve the program. For example, if post-graduate survey results indicate that a particular National Board Proposition is not being met as a result of completing the program, the cadre will redesign the course in which that standard should be met or make other modifications to the program.